

## MINUTES OF THE IPPC EPHYTO STEERING GROUP (ESG) VIRTUAL MEETING

5 November 2024, 14.00-15.00, Rome Time (UTC+1)

### 1. Opening of the Meeting

- [1] The IPPC Secretariat (hereafter referred to as the “Secretariat”) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

### 2. Meeting arrangements

- [2] There were no comments from the participants on the proposed agenda for the meeting ([Appendix 1](#)).

### 3. Administrative matters

- [3] The Secretariat introduced the two meeting documents: the agenda and the draft minutes of the ESG Meeting held in October 2024.
- [4] The list of participants is provided in [Appendix 2](#).
- [5] Regarding the adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting, there were no comments from the participants and therefore the ESG:
- (1) *approved* the draft minutes of the ESG Meeting held on 01 October 2024.

### 4. IPPC Secretariat updates

- [6] The Secretariat updated the ESG on the main outcomes of the Bureau meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), held in October 2024.
- [7] As regards the **ePhyto Multidonor Trust Fund**, its establishment is currently in the appraisal stage of the FAO procedure, but it would take at least two more months before its establishment. Noting that some countries might not be able to contribute in 2025 unless they received their contribution letter on time, the CPM Bureau agreed to send two letters: a first generic letter about (voluntary) contributions, referring to the CPM-18 (2024) paper for the specific rates requested, with a follow-up letter to be sent once the ePhyto Multidonor Trust Fund has been established and monies can be received.
- [8] During discussions, there were concerns about the timing as the fiscal year of some countries may be different than the calendar year and about voluntary contributions already provided by some countries. Indeed, some countries typically make a voluntary contribution two or three times higher than the expected amount presented in the letter. It may then be difficult to explain to decision makers why they should pay more than the bill received. The Secretariat then indicated that in the letter a specific sentence will indicate that “any contribution beyond the expected amount would be greatly appreciated”.
- [9] In addition, and to avoid an administrative burden, the ESG suggested that UNICC could generate a report that countries can access on demand and showing their usage of the IPPC ePhyto Solution and their related expected contribution. This would allow countries to plan their contributions according to their specific timeframe namely their fiscal year and on the most recent statistics of usage.
- [10] As regards the item on **forwarding ePhytos to third-party digital platforms**, the Secretariat informed that a response was expected from the FAO Legal Office on the legal implications. In addition, the CPM Bureau decided to submit the issue at CPM for approval. During discussions, while emphasizing this feature would be completely optional, the ESG highlighted that ePhyto system aimed to avoid using physical documents and help both governments and industry achieve a truly paperless process.

[11] Regarding discussions during the meeting held on 31 October 2024 of the **Focus Group on ePhyto sustainable funding**, the Chair raised concern about fees associated with incoming ePhytos that are not required by the importing country. As a result, this could discourage countries to participate in ePhyto if they are charged for incoming ePhytos they do not want. During discussions ESG members suggested, when the funding model will evolve, considering only outgoing ePhytos (exports) rather than both incoming and outgoing ePhytos.

[12] After discussion, the ESG:

- (2) *invited* the Secretariat to raise the point of considering in the future only outgoing ePhytos (exports) in the calculation of the funding model, in the paper on ePhyto sustainable funding to be drafted for CPM-19 (March 2025).

## 5. Regional updates

[13] The Africa representative updated the ESG on a workshop held on 22-24 October in Nairobi and organized by TradeMark Africa, which focused on creating a standardized certification system for countries wanting to adopt ePhyto. This system aims to go beyond just the issuance of certificates, supporting the entire process leading to the issuance of phytosanitary certificates. Zambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique, participated in the workshop.

[14] The Africa representative also updated the ESG of ePhyto status in some countries. Zambia is currently working on integrating their system into the national single window, with the support of TradeMark Africa. Ethiopia has recently joined the IPPC ePhyto hub and is in the early stages of developing its national certification system and is receiving support from TradeMark Africa too. Tanzania has started exchanging ePhytos and is improving its system. Kenya is also improving their system to ensure accurate information is sent. Mozambique is at the stage of preparing their system with the support of TradeMark Africa before to register to the Hub.

## 6. UNICC updates

[15] Following a request from the Secretariat and to be consistent with the pilot funding model endorsed at CPM-18 (April 2024), the UNICC proposed a new version of the Hub Infographics currently displayed on the [ephytoexchange.org](http://ephytoexchange.org) website.

[16] After discussion and considering that the pilot funding model may evolve in the future and that Hub Infographics must remain easy to read, the ESG:

- (3) *agreed* to keep Hub Infographics as it is for the time being.

## 7. Any other business

[17] There was no other business.

## 8. Date of the next meeting

[18] The next ESG meeting is scheduled on 3 December 2024 at 2.00 pm, Rome Time (UTC+1).

## 9. Close of the meeting

[19] The Chairperson thanked the participants for their active participation.

**Action List**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. In the paper on ePhyto sustainable funding to be drafted for CPM-19 (March 2025), consider in the future only outgoing ePhytos (exports) in the calculation of the funding model.	IPPC Secretariat	6 December 2024

**Appendix 1****AGENDA OF THE EPHYTO STEERING GROUP MEETING****5 November 2024, 14.00-15.00, Rome Time (UTC+1)**

<b>Agenda Item</b>		<b>Document No.</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Opening of the Meeting</b>		IPPC Secretariat
<b>2.</b>	<b>Meeting Arrangements</b>		
2.1	Adoption of the Agenda	2024-11_ESG_01_Agenda	Chairperson
<b>3.</b>	<b>Administrative Matters</b>		
3.1	Review of meeting documents		IPPC Secretariat
3.2	Meeting Participants	<a href="#">ESG Membership list</a>	IPPC Secretariat
3.3	Approval of minutes of previous meeting	2024-10_ESG_Meeting_Minutes_Draft	IPPC Secretariat
<b>4.</b>	<b>IPPC Secretariat updates</b>		IPPC Secretariat
<b>5.</b>	<b>Regional updates</b>		
	Updates of activities in the FAO Regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Africa</li> <li>- Asia</li> <li>- Europe</li> <li>- Latin America and Carribean</li> <li>- Near East</li> <li>- North America</li> <li>- Southwest Pacific</li> </ul>		Regional representatives
<b>6.</b>	<b>UNICC updates</b>		UNICC
<b>7.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>		Chairperson
<b>8.</b>	<b>Date of the next meeting</b>		IPPC Secretariat
<b>9.</b>	<b>Close of the Meeting</b>		Chairperson

**Appendix 2****EPHYTO STEERING GROUP (ESG) MEETING PARTICIPANT LIST****5 November 2024, 14.00-15.00, Rome Time (UTC+1)**

<b>Region / Role</b>	<b>Name / Organization</b>	<b>Email address</b>
Africa Member	<b>Mr Josiah Musili SYANDA</b> Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)	<a href="mailto:jsyanda@kephis.org">jsyanda@kephis.org</a>
Latin America and Caribbean Member	<b>Mr Rodrigo ROBLES</b> Electronic Certification eCert SAG, Ministry of Agriculture Chile	<a href="mailto:rodrigo.robles@sag.gob.cl">rodrigo.robles@sag.gob.cl</a>
North America Member (ESG Chairperson)	<b>Mr Christian B DELLIS</b> United States Department of Agriculture, Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine	<a href="mailto:christian.b.dellis@usda.gov">christian.b.dellis@usda.gov</a>
Southwest Pacific Member	<b>Mr Piriariki MAAO</b> Biosecurity Service Ministry of Agriculture Cook Islands	<a href="mailto:piriariki.maa@cookislands.gov.ck">piriariki.maa@cookislands.gov.ck</a>
UNICC	<b>Mr Gianluca NUZZO</b>	<a href="mailto:nuzzo@unicc.org">nuzzo@unicc.org</a>
CPM Bureau	<b>Mr Barik Dris</b> Chef de la Division de la protection des végétaux Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits Alimentaires (ONSSA) Morocco	<a href="mailto:dris.barik@onssa.gov.ma">dris.barik@onssa.gov.ma</a> <a href="mailto:barikdris@gmail.com">barikdris@gmail.com</a>
	<b>Mr Dominique MENON</b> IPPC Secretariat / IFU ePhyto Programme Officer	<a href="mailto:dominique.menon@fao.org">dominique.menon@fao.org</a>